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Rise and Fall
of the

Blood + Thunder

Dime Novel

L Beagle

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

COMPENDIOUS

DIME NOVELS
BOUGHT & SOLD
CHARLES BRAGIN
1525 W. 12th St.
Brooklyn 4, N. Y.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

"BLOOD AND THUNDERS"

or

DIME NOVELS OF THE 80's and 90's

By Floyd L. Beagle

"There was a sharp crack of a rifle and another redskin bit the dust!" This is typical of the way some of the authors of our old "blood and thunders" used to start their stories.

Remember the days when we would live through the daring feats of Deadwood Dick and Buffalo Bill and the triumphs of Frank Merriwell, Frank Reade and Yankee Doodle? It wasn't necessary to read pages of tiresome description before coming to the action. They usually started with a "bang" and interest never lagged until the end.

Many a time we have hidden one of these old thrillers in our pistol pocket, then sneaked out in the barn or some other secluded spot to become absorbed in the adventures of Diamond Dick or the outlawry of the James Boys. Some youngster would take his reading too seriously and decide to go west and kill Indians. The writer admits that he got the idea when about 14 years of age, saved up his earnings until he managed to accumulate 50c, give an older boy 35c for an old 22-cal. revolver whose trigger did not work and would fire only by working the hammer with the thumb, and invested the other 15c in a box of .22 cartridges. Then go down by the creek to practice the "quick draw." After many attemps to get the gun out of his hip pocket without getting the hammer tangled up in his clothes and shooting at the mark until his ammunition was exhausted he decided to wait until such time as he was able to get more dependable equipment. The Indians and Bandits were saved for the time being.

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COMPLETE. BEADLE'S NUMBER 1.

DIME NOVELS

THE CHOICEST WORKS OF THE MOST POPULAR AUTHORS

ONE DIME

MALAESKA the INDIAN WIFE

THE WHITE HUNTER.

BY MRS. ANN S. STEPHENS.

BEADLE AND COMPANY.

NEW YORK: 118 WILLIAM ST. LONDON: 44 PATERNOSTER ROW.

G. W. Cottrell, Boston, Mass.

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This is probably one reason why our parents were so opposed to our reading these novels. Many theories have been advanced for parental objection to this class of literature of we youngsters of the 80's and 90's, but compared to the smut gangster stories available to the youth of today the old "dime novels" of our time were models of decency. The hero always stood ready to protect the heroine, who was always a "perfect lady," to defend her virtues to the last drop of his blood. We have read hundreds of these old time novels and do not recall an instance of smut or suggestive situations. The stories always had a moral and right triumphed in the end.

We think the "dime novel" a thing of the past — and rightly. They were published as late as the 20's but their heyday was between the 80's and the turn of the century. Today they are as rare as a homing pigeon.

The first dime novel was published by Beadle & Co. in June, 1860. A salmon backed book 4 x 6¼" having 126 pages, written by Ann Stephens entitled "Malaeska; The Indian Wife of the White Hunter", now, an extremely rare volume much sought after by collectors, valued at about $500.00.

Just how the Beadles happened to start publishing the dime novels is not exactly known, but we do know that young Erastus Beadle came to Cooperstown, N. Y. in 1841 carrying a gunny sack over his shoulder which contained 26 hardwood blocks, each a hand-carved letter of the alphabet. These letters he had whittled out with a Jack-knife at the age of 15 and for three years had travelled around stamping names on bags or anything at a penny a letter.

Beadle had always wanted to be a printer and hearing of Elihu Phinney, printer and publisher, went to work for him in Cooperstown as an apprentice. There, learning all he could he went to Buffalo and at 26 had a shop of his own. His first idea was collecting the popular lyrics of the day, put 40 or 50 of these in a volume and sell at 10c each. In a few years he was well established and was issuing two magazines, "The Youth's Casket" and "Home Monthly." Desiring to enlarge his

THE MOST THRILLING TALE OF THE WILD WEST EVER WRITTEN!

Beadle's Dime New York Library

Vol. V. Complete in One Number. Beadle & Adams, Publishers, 98 WILLIAM STREET, NEW YORK. Price Ten Cents. No. 54

When wanted, I am always on hand! —Ho! ho

ALWAYS-ON-HAND:

Or,

The Sportive Sport of the Foot-Hills

BY PHILIP S. WARNE,

AUTHOR OF "PATENT LEATHER JOE," "STEEL MACK," "A HARD CROWD," "THE SLEEPING RAPPER," ETC.

CHAPTER I.

A BOLD BLOW.

"Whoa, there! Easy! Easy! Steady, my Tragedy! Steady, Tragedy, steady! Whoa! Whoa! Whoa!

"Now you've done it, you have!

Tragedy, my! Tragedy, my!

"Oh, do keep still, can't you!

Steady! steady! steady! steady!

Tragedy! Tragedy! Tragedy!

"Oh, Gracious! Gracious Goodness! Gracious Me! Gracious Me! Gracious Me!

"Oh, Gracious Me! Gracious Me! Gracious Me!

Down to Left, Promenade!

business he took in with him his brother, Irwin P. Beadle and they moved to New York City in 1858 and founded Beadle & Co., specializing in dime publications such as Song Books, Joke Books, Almanacs, etc.

Starting in the summer of 1860 with the first dime novel, "Maleska", which became an immediate success, he began to specialize in this type of literature, purchasing all manuscripts outright and taking all the risks. His early novels extolled the deeds of Boone, Crokett, Kit Carson, Sam Houston and other American heroes.

In 1866 Beadle took in two brothers, William and David Adams and the firm became Beadle & Adams which firm succeeded in signing up the best "two-gun" writers, among them being Buffalo Bill and his biographer, Col. Prentiss Ingraham, then other writers who possessed a ghoulish imagination and a demon pen.

At this time George P. Munro, a former employee left Beadle and with Irwin Beadle, who had been pushed out of the original concern for drunkeness, began to issue "New Dime Novels" and competition started with George's own brother Norman Munro establishing another dime novel factory and for thirty years the struggle for supremacy was between Beadle and the Munro brothers.

With the entrance of new blood the dime novel swung into a period of sensationalism. The fiction degenerated almost overnight. The Munro's went in for a blood-and-thunder type that made the previous novels tame by comparison. Beadle countered by "killing a few more Indians" and resurrecting the lurid tales of Ingraham. In addition he created "Pocket Novels" followed by "Boys Library", American Tales", and "Frank Starr's American Novels." Starr was Beadle's foreman.

These small sized novels continued until about 1878 when Beadle brought out the New York Dime Library with a size of 8½ x 12½, 32 pages running 1009 issues, 1878 to 1898. In this library appeared the best of the Beadle Stories, by Col. Ingraham, Buckskin Sam, Ned Buntline, Mayne Reid, Oll Coomes, etc. Here also appeared the Buffalo Bill stories which made him a national hero.

BEADLE'S
HALF DIME Library

Issued Weekly. Entered at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., as Second Class Mail Matter. Copyright, 1885, by BEADLE AND ADAMS. June 2, 1885.

Vol. XVI. Single Number. PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY BEADLE AND ADAMS, No. 98 WILLIAM STREET, NEW YORK. Price, 5 Cents. No. 410.

Deadwood Dick's Diamonds; or, The Mystery of Joan Porter.

BY EDWARD L. WHEELER.

AUTHOR OF "DEADWOOD DICK" NOVELS, "BOSTON BOB" NOVELS, ETC., ETC.

"BACK!" THE BUFFALO CRIED, TO DEADWOOD DICK. "ADVANCE ANOTHER STEP, AND I'LL SHOW THE GAL'S BRAINS OUT!"

About the same time Beadle also published Beadle's Half Dime Library, a companion weekly to the Dime Library. The tales were written by practically the same authors but on less mature lines. This was a 16 page publication and ran for 987 issues. In this weekly appeared all the great Deadwood Dick tales by E. J. Wheeler, over 120 stories.

As long as there was a Wild West to celebrate, Beadle was secure in his domination of the dime novel market, but when the railroads began to dot the west, big cities appear and the Indians and Cowboys thin out, authors were forced to tap new veins for material. Some then began to write of Broadway, Wall Street and the Bowery. Then the market began to be cluttered up with 32 page colored covers.

Lower and lower sank the old "black and whites" such as Old Sleuth Library, Wide Awake, New York Detective, Frank Reades and Old Cap Collier, until they stopped entirely about 1890.

Beadle died in 1897. It can be said that he always stimulated an interest in American life — the glory of the pioneer struggling for existence — immortalizing the names and deeds of America's buckskin heroes. He deserves a word of grateful acknowledgement.

COLORED COVERS

After the demise of the old "black and whites" the youths of the country were to be entertained by nickel libraries with colored covers. These novels were usually 32 pages and the size 7" x 10" to 8" x 12½".

Simultaneous with their appearance in cheaper form the stories underwent a transformation. The love interest was a little greater and the characters more refined than the tough old wild and woolly one of the 80's.

The Big Three publishers of the highly popular nickel libraries were now, Frank Tousey, Street & Smith

DETECTIVE LIBRARY

Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1906, by FRANK TOUSEY, in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington, D. C.

Entered at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., as Second Class Matter.

No. 630. [OBITUARY.] FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher, 24 & 26 North Moore Street, New York. [PRICE 10 CENTS.] Vol. I.

New York, December 21, 1906. Issued Every Saturday.

The Subscription Price of DETECTIVE LIBRARY to the end of 1906 is $2.50 per copy, post paid. Address FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher, 24 & 26 North Moore Street, New York. Box 2730.

THE JAMES BOYS Working for Old King Brady

OR, Carl Greene and the Road Agents of the Kaw.

By A NEW YORK DETECTIVE.

As he stood all eyes were upon him. Thus Carl could see where the others present in the room could not see behind their backs. Suddenly the hangings opposite were slightly parted and a face appeared. It was that of a young girl of great beauty, with skin as black as a gypsy, piercing black eyes, and a wealth of raven hair.

and Munsey. Some of the most popular five cent weeklies published between 1890 and 1900 were:

TIP TOP WEEKLY, running 850 issues from 1896 to 1913, containing 32 pages. The first 264 issues were 7 x 10 and then the size was increased to 8 x 11.

All series were written by Gilbert Pattern under the pen name of Bert L. Standish and were devoted entirely to the doings of Frank Merriwell, who by all odds was the most popular figure in this twilight period of the dime novel. Merriwell was entirely a new character — the ideal school and college athlete, fearless, loyal and friend to both man and beast. Tip Top was a sell-out from the first issue and made a huge fortune for Street & Smith.

Another popular character was that matchless detective Nick Carter who was even brainer than Old Cap Collier or Old Sleuth. Nick first appeared in the Nick Carter Library, black and white, running from 1891 to 1897. From then it was published by Street & Smith, colored covers, running 819 issues. Nearly all Carter Stories were written by John R. Coryell, a native of Cornwall, N. Y.

Other popular Street & Smith publications were:

Diamond Dick, Jr., Weekly, 762 issues. A continuation of the Diamond Dick stories in N. Y. Five Cent Weekly.

Brave & Bold, 429 issues, from 1903 to 1911. These stories were nearly all reprints from story papers.

Red, White & Blue, 58 issues, stories of a Union soldier and a Confederate sailor.

True Blue, 54 issues. Naval Academy tales by Ensign Clark Fitch who was really Upton Sinclair.

Buffalo Bill Stories, 591 issues. Some reprints of stories in Beadle's but mostly by Eugene T. Sawyer.

SPECIAL NUMBER.

Old Cap. Collier LIBRARY.

No. 469. MUNRO'S PUBLISHING HOUSE, 5 Cents.
24 & 26 VANDEWATER STREET, NEW YORK. - DECEMBER 17, 1892.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1892, by BENJAMIN L. MUNRO, in the office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington, D. C.—Entered at the Post Office, N. Y., as Second Class Matter.

JAY GOULD'S OFFICE BOY

OR

JAMES MARVIN

The Young Napoleon of Finance.

BY A WALL ST. DETECTIVE

Young Jim kept his eye steadily upon the cunning brokers.

Jesse James Stories, 138 issues, 1901 to 1904. Mostly reprints from the old Log Cabin Library, by W. B. Lawson.

Bowery Boy, 100 issues, 1904 to 1905. Adventures of Bowery Billy a boot black boy detective, by John R. Conway.

My Queen, 29 issues, 1900, by Grace Shirley (Sheldon Downs). The only girl's dime novel published.

Street & Smith also published a dozen or more novels which were very successful, such as: Adventure Weekly, Do & Dare, Comrades, Rough Rider Weekly, Young Rover, Motor Stories, All Sports Library, Old Broadbrim, Might & Main.

The Tousey Company was less fortunate than the establishment of Street & Smith. We think that as a whole Tousey published better and more interesting stories than it's competitors during the reign of these "pulp" coloreds. However, after Frank Tousey's death in 1915 his nickel libraries began to go out of existence. His widow, Rosalie Tousey, countinued with only two of the old weeklies, "Secret Service" and "Wild West." These two expired in 1925 when Street & Smith bought the copyrights from Mrs. Tousey.

The most popular of the Tousey publications were:

Pluck & Luck, 874 issues, then all the numbers were reprinted making a total of 1605. This library was a continuation of the old Tousey Wide Awake with different types of stories and different author.

Secret Service Weekly, 725 issues, then reprinted for a total of 1374. This weekly was devoted entirely to Old King Brady (of the N. Y. Detective Lib.) and his new partner, Young King Brady. Written by Francis W. Doughty under the pen name of N. Y. Detective.

Frank Reade Weekly, 96 issues, 1902. Reprints of the old Frank Reade Library.

Young Klondike, 39 issues. Also by F. W. Doughty.

NICK CARTER WEEKLY

No 155

NICK CARTER'S CURIOUS CLIENT

OR A CRIMINAL WITH MORE GALL THAN [illegible]

BY THE AUTHOR OF NICK CARTER

NICK AND HIS PRISONER WERE SURROUNDED BY THE LYNCHING MOB. A BLACKSMITH STRUCK THE HORSE WITH A SLEDGE-HAMMER.

Liberty Boys of '76, 612 issues. The most popular of all dime novel "war" libraries. Written by S. A. D. Cox and Cecil Burleigh.

James Boys Weekly, 139 issues, 1901-1903. Reprints from the N. Y. Detective Lib. of 1880. This publication was very lurid, in fact so lurid that the government finally denied it mail privileges. This library is very much sought after.

Work & Win, 1382 issues. Fred Fearnot the hero was the only successful rival to Frank Merriwell and outlasted him in real dime novel form.

Blue & Gray Weekly, ran 32 issues, 1904-1905. Civil War stories of Jack Clark of the Union Army and Will Prentiss, Confederate. Numbers of this weekly are very hard to find.

Fame & Fortune, 488 issues. Then reprinted for a total of 1192, 1905 to 1928. These stories usually dealt with Wall St. boy messengers making fortunes.

Wild West Weekly, 1294 issues.

Yankee Doodle, only 14 issues, 1898. These are all stories of the Spanish American War and in this series Col. Theodore Roosevelt appears for the only time as a dime novel hero.

Tousey published numerous other libraries, among them being: Three Chums, Snaps, Handsome Harry, Young Athletes Weekly, Frank Manley, All Round, Young Glory and Young Wide Awake.

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Related to literature as Jazz is to music, the dime novel represents a vast under current of sub-library fiction brought to an equally vast public by the methods of Big business. It was read without difficulty; it required nothing like cogitation. It was simply felt. In it's heyday it degenerated to the level of puerile readers for whom it symbolized adventure. And yet the only cheap amusement, masked in the guise of literature, was the only vehicle that celebrated on a grand scale the Winning of the West. Its writers, many of them were never west of the Mississippi, were the sole Homers of the first American event of epic proportions.

Issued weekly. By subscription, $2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at the N. Y. Post Office by STREET & SMITH

No. 242. Price, Five Cents

FRANK MERRIWELL'S HIGH JUMP

OR WINNING THE CHAMPIONSHIP FROM HARVARD

BY BURT L. STANDISH

GATHERING HIMSELF FOR A FINAL EFFORT, FRANK LEAPED OVER THE HARVARD FULL BACK.

Facilitated by business enterprise and a wealth of raw material, the dime novel evolved through the eternal laws of supply and demand — the supply of ever more thrilling amusement at the juvenile American mind. Of doubtful value as a literary movement, its story, in its social significance, is a fascinating record of a nineteenth century, one hundred per cent American pastime.

We wish to thank
Charles Bragin
for some of the
material used in
this pamphlet.
— F.L.B.